

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 HONG K 13929 280617Z

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ACTION SS-25

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R 280510Z DEC 74

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3301

INFO USLO PEKING

S E C R E T HONG KONG 13929

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CH US

SUBJECT: US-PRC RELATIONS

REF: PEKING 2331

1. WE HAVE BEEN PASSED BRITISH FOREIGN OFFICE TELEGRAM WHICH REPORTS ON CONVERSATION BETWEEN UK FOREIGN SECRETARY AND PRC AMBASSADOR (REFTEL) AND THINK IT IMPORTANT TO NOTE THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE AMBASSADOR DESCRIBED SINO-U.S. RELATIONS AS "DEVELOPING" OR "PROGRESSING." THE AMBASSADOR VOLUNTEERED HIS COMMENT AND COUCHED IT AS A DENIAL OF PRESS ALLEGATIONS TO THE CONTRARY.

2. THIS PORTION OF THE TELEGRAM READS: QUOTE SUNG VOLUNTEERED THAT ALTHOUGH THE PRESS PERSISTED IN ALLEGING THAT SINO-U.S. RELATIONS WERE LESS GOOD IN FACT THEY WERE DEVELOPING. HIS INTERPRETER IN FACT TRANSLATED THIS AS 'THERE WAS PROGRESS', UNQUOTE

3. COMMENT: IT MAY, OF COURSE, BE COINCIDENCE THAT AMBASSADOR SUNG DENIES PRESS ALLEGATIONS ABOUT A DOWN-TURN IN SINO-U.S. RELATIONS ON THE SAME DAY (DECEMBER 17) THAT VICE FOREIGN MINISTER YU CHAN IS PUMPING UP AMERICAN JOURNALIST SAM JAFFE TO MAKE JUST SUCH AN

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ALLEGATION (PEKING 2305). EASIEST EXPLANATION IS

THAT CHINESE LINE SHIFTED SUDDENLY AND RENDERED
AMBASSADOR'S INSTRUCTIONS OUT OF DATE. WE WOULD
NOT RULE OUT YET, HOWEVER, THE ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITY
THAT THE CHINESE COULD BE SHADING THEIR LINE TO FIT
DIFFERENT AUDIENCES. PEKING MIGHT, FOR EXAMPLE, WANT
TO INJECT A GREATER SENSE OF ANXIETY INTO AMERICAN
PUBLIC OPINION, WHILE REASSURING A CLOSE AND WELL-
ATTUNED U.S. ALLY LIKE THE UK THAT AFFAIRS ARE PROPERLY
IN HAND.
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